



### In This Issue:

Your Two Cents

AFM Update

Around ARS

Photo Corner

Notable Awards

Did You Know?



[www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents](http://www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents)

*Your Two Cents (Y2C)* continues to be a forum for discussion of ARS topics that are important to you! Check out the latest ideas submitted by your colleagues, and submit your own! Spring is a time for renewal (and cleaning up), so be on the lookout for some changes on the [Y2C](#) site. Loss of some key staff members has caused a temporary increase in our response times to ideas, as well as postponed design changes. The good news is that we have gotten folks back on the response team, and we have a new Web design team member, who will be making some improvements to the site. We will also be able to incorporate some of the suggestions submitted by you, our readers! And is the training budget in your unit non-existent? You aren't alone! Check out the [Toolkit](#) on the [ARS Cultural Transformation](#) site! Our theme for March is "Work-Life Balance." You can find links to AgLearn courses on this topic, as well as books and activities for your use. ❀

*Please submit story ideas and national award items to Tara T. Weaver-Missick, [tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov](mailto:tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov) or call 301-504-1663.*

### Working Successfully in Virtual Teams

The new ARS Administrative and Financial Management (AFM) organization became effective on February 12, 2012, along with the establishment of three Business Service Centers (BSCs) to serve REE employees with "virtually" centralized staff. At the core of the BSC structure are over 400 employees located throughout the country. To provide the best service possible to REE staff, the BSCs will receive training on working effectively as virtual teams.



BSC supervisors and managers will learn how to lead and engage their employees early in the team-building process and develop team identity and culture, while all employees involved in the new AFM organization will receive personality-type assessment training, as well as "Crucial Conversation" training. For more on the new AFM organization, see the [February 2012 issue](#) of *ARS & You*. ❀

### Around ARS

**USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack** and the USDA National Agricultural Library, in partnership with the American Farm Bureau Federation, recently announced the launch of [Start2Farm.gov](#), a new online portal that provides assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers. The site delivers links to training, financing, technical assistance and other support services specifically for beginning farmers and ranchers, along with their success stories and case studies. The portal was also recently showcased at the second annual Beginning Farmer and Rancher Conference, held jointly with

the American Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Rancher Conference, in Grand Rapids, MI. ❖

In conjunction with USDA's 150th anniversary celebrations, the People's Garden Initiative (PGI) is sending one seed packet of the 'Abraham Lincoln' tomato to all registered People's Gardens throughout the country. Each seed packet contains approximately 10 seeds, and instructions can be found on the packet as well as on the [PGI Web site](#). All USDA employees and partners who tend these gardens are invited to grow this heirloom variety as a living tribute to the Department's visionary founder. The tomato will also be featured in the People's Garden at USDA Headquarters.

The 'Abraham Lincoln' tomato was introduced in 1923 by the W.H. Buckbee seed company of Rockford, IL, which named the tomato in honor of Illinois' Greatest Son. The tomato was released without much fanfare, but over the years it proved itself to be one of the great tomato classics that survived the shift to hybrids during the 1940s.

All USDA employees and partners tending People's Gardens are encouraged to submit stories and photos of anniversary activities for posting on the [USDA Blog](#) or on the [PGI Web site](#). ARS employees should submit materials to [Sean Adams](#), ARS Information Staff, and partners should contact PGI at [peoplesgarden@usda.gov](mailto:peoplesgarden@usda.gov). ❖

Representatives from both the **ARS Information Staff** and the **USDA National Agricultural Library** exhibited at USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Forum in Arlington, VA, February 23-24, 2012. Some 2,000 people attended the Forum, including government and industry economists and scientists, USDA employees, business leaders, policymakers, producers, college students, and agricultural science embassy attachés and other officials representing many nations.

The two ARS exhibits featured a range of resources, including two newly launched sites, [Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) and [Start2Farm.gov](#).

Secretary **Tom Vilsack** was the keynote speaker for the event [[watch video](#)], which featured a panel of nine former USDA Secretaries—Ed Schafer, Mike Johanns, Ann Veneman, Dan Glickman, Mike Espy, Clayton Yeutter, John Block, Robert Bergland, and John Knebel. The panel videos can be viewed here:

Panel: Agriculture: [Visions of the Future \(Part I\)](#)

Panel: Agriculture: [Visions of the Future \(Part II\)](#) ❖



## Photo Corner

In the photos below: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students from Poplarville High School during their visit at the ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory, Poplarville, MS, on February 23, 2012.



## Notable Awards

Research Associate **Igseo Choi**, ARS Animal Parasitic Disease Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, has been selected as a 2012 ASAS Midwest Section Young Scholar by the Board of the Midwestern Section of the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) and the Midwest Branch of the American Dairy Science Association (ADSA). The award is given to recent Ph.D. graduates who have made an outstanding contribution in research in animal/dairy science. Choi completed his Ph.D. in animal science at Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, in May 2011. He was recognized during the 2012 Midwest ASAS/ADSA Annual Meeting in Des Moines, IA, March 19-21. ❀



**Gerald Seiler (left) and Chao-Chien Jan.**

Botanist **Gerald J. Seiler** and Geneticist **Chao-Chien Jan**, both with the ARS Northern Crop Science Laboratory, Fargo, ND, received the V.S. Pustovoit Award from the International Sunflower Association, Paris, France. Seiler was honored for his contributions in genetic resources using the wild sunflower species ancestors for improving cultivated sunflower. Jan was honored for his contributions in sunflower cytogenetics and interspecific gene transfer using wild *Helianthus* species. The awards were presented at the 18th International Sunflower Conference on February 29, 2012, in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The V.S. Pustovoit Award is the highest honor conferred to individuals working in the sunflower industry. ❀

Supervisory Research Food Technologist **Tommy L. Wheeler** and Research Food Technologist **Steven D. Shackelford**, both with the ARS U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, NE, received the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Administrator's Superior Service Award for their contributions to improving the safety of

products in the Federal Purchase Ground Beef Program. The ARS scientists were part of the Members of the Federal Purchase Ground Beef Food Safety Team, which includes members from AMS, FSIS, and FNS. The award was presented on February 28, 2012, in the USDA Whitten Building, Washington, DC. ❀

Research Geneticist **Kreg A. Leymaster**, ARS U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, NE, received the 2012 Distinguished Alumnus Award from Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association for his achievements and excellence in his profession. He was recognized on March 3 at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow in Columbus, OH. ❀



**Kreg Leymaster and Greeley, a 9-year-old female Great Pyrenees, who, together with the other Great Pyrenees guard dogs at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, protects sheep from predators such as coyotes.**



**Neal Martin.**

in near-infrared reflectance spectroscopy (NIRS) analysis through uniformity, standardization, and good practices to bring excellence in forage and feed testing to the farmer. ❀

**Neal Martin**, Director, ARS U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison, WI, received the first-ever John S. Shenk Memorial Award from the NIRS Forage and Feed Testing Consortium (NIRSC) for his 20 years of service to the organization. The award was presented at the NIRSC annual meeting on February 15, 2012. The Consortium works to promote accuracy



W. Carroll Johnson, III.



Daniel R. Evarts.

Research Agronomist **W. Carroll Johnson, III** and Agricultural Science Research Technician (Plants) **Daniel R. Evarts**, both with the ARS Crop Protection and Management Research Unit in Tifton, GA, received the 2012 Land Stewardship Award from Georgia Organics for their research and technology transfer efforts on systems of weed control in organic crop production. The awards were presented during the Georgia Organics annual conference in Columbus, GA, February 24-25, 2012. Johnson conducts weed science research on organic peanut, grains, melons, and Vidalia® sweet onion. Evarts provides technical research support and technical advice to organic growers in the set-up and operation of specialized weed control implements.♣

## Did You Know?

There's nothing like a glass of orange juice, half a grapefruit, or a slice of lemon in a cool drink. Citrus remains a popular food for many of us.

But did you know that an emerging disease now threatens the Nation's citrus industry, and that ARS scientists are working hard to protect it?

The disease, called "Huanglongbing" (Chinese for "yellow dragon disease"), is also known as citrus greening disease. Since being discovered in Florida in 2005, it has infected millions of citrus trees in that important citrus-producing State.

Citrus greening is a bacterial disease spread by the Asian citrus psyllid. Plants can be infected for 2 years before characteristic yellow shoots and mottled leaves begin to appear. Infected trees produce unmarketable, bitter fruit and become unproductive in 5 to 7 years.

ARS researchers are taking a number of approaches to deal with the problem. In one study, they developed a test that reveals whether the psyllids are in fact carrying *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*, one of three microbial species thought to cause the disease.

Also, scientists are using a high-tech method to rapidly identify, with 95-percent accuracy, citrus plant leaves infected with the citrus greening. Researchers have sequenced more than 95 percent of the genome of *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* and have posted results in GenBank, an online genetic resources database.

Finally, scientists also are looking at the psyllids themselves to determine which ones are capable of spreading the disease. And they have experimented with essential oils—emitted by citrus plants and their relatives—to attract psyllids. As lures, these essential oils could be used to detect psyllids and monitor their movement.

Some of the oils studied so far include petitgrain oils, which are essential oils used as perfume bases, and Orange Jessamine, a popular ornamental plant related to citrus.

With this and other research, ARS scientists are doing their part to make sure our favorite citrus products remain a healthy part of our diets.

### Did you know that...

- Per capita consumption of orange juice in the United States was 3.6 gallons in 2010-11?
- About 23.5 million boxes of lemons were produced in the United States in 2010-11?
- Grapefruit production in the United States was about 30.2 million boxes in 2010-11?

(Data from *Fruit and Tree Nuts Outlook*, published by USDA Economic Research Service.)

Written by **Sean Adams**, ARS Information Staff.



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We thank the following individuals for contributing stories, ideas, photographs, and their time to this issue:

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